CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A method comprising:

5   during initiation of a real-time media session between a plurality of user stations via a

communication server, the communication server instructing at least one of the user stations to

operate in a mode selected from the group consisting of half-duplex mode and full-duplex mode.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

10   the communication server selecting the mode.

3.   The method of claim 2, wherein each user station is (i) a half-duplex capable

station or (ii) a half-duplex and full-duplex capable station, and wherein selecting the mode

comprises:

15   the communication server learning that at least one of the user stations is half-duplex

capable and responsively selecting half-duplex as the mode.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein each user station is (i) a half-duplex capable

station or (ii) a half-duplex and full-duplex capable station, and wherein the method further

20   comprises:

during the real-time media session, the communication server detecting that a half-duplex

capable station joins the session and responsively instructing each other participating station to

operate in the half-duplex mode.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein instructing the at least one user station to operate in the mode comprises:

sending an instruction to the at least one user station, the instruction indicating the mode.

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6.   The method of claim 5, wherein sending the instruction comprises sending the instruction within session setup signaling.

7.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

10   a given one of the user stations receiving the instruction and responsively operating in the mode during the real-time media session.

8.   The method of claim 7, wherein operating in the mode during the real-time media session comprises:

15   receiving an incoming media stream from the communication server while sending an outgoing media stream to the communication server during the real-time media session;

treating the incoming media stream as a floor denial if the mode is half-duplex; and

playing out the incoming media stream if the mode is full-duplex.

20   9.   The method of claim 8, wherein treating the incoming media stream as a floor denial comprises:

presenting a floor denial alert to a user in response to receipt of the incoming media stream.

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10. The method of claim 9, wherein the alert comprises at least one of an audible alert, a visual alert and a vibratory alert.

5   11. The method of claim 7, wherein operating in the mode during the real-time media session comprises:

if the mode is half-duplex, then applying implicit floor control; and

if the mode is full-duplex, then not applying implicit floor control.

10   12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

the communication server operating in the mode during the session.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein operating in the mode comprises:

if the mode is half-duplex, then applying implicit floor control; and

15   if the mode is full-duplex, then not applying implicit floor control.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

during initiation of the real-time media session, the communication server receiving from a user station a request to operate in the mode; and

20   the server responsively performing the instructing function.

15. A method comprising:

a user station receiving from a communication server an instruction indicating whether the user station should operate in a half-duplex mode or a full-duplex mode;

the user station engaging in a real-time media session with one or more other user stations via the communication server, and, in response to the instruction, the user-station operating in the mode during the real-time media session.

16.   The method of claim 15, wherein operating in the mode during the real-time media session comprises:

receiving an incoming media stream from the communication server while sending an outgoing media stream to the communication server during the real-time media session;

treating the incoming media stream as a floor denial if the mode is half-duplex; and

playing out the incoming media stream if the mode is full-duplex.

17.   The method of claim 16, wherein treating the incoming media stream as a floor denial comprises:

presenting a floor denial alert to a user in response to receipt of the incoming media stream.

18.   The method of claim 17, wherein the alert comprises at least one of an audible alert, a visual alert and a vibratory alert.

19.   The method of claim 15, wherein operating in the mode during the real-time media session comprises:

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if the mode is half-duplex, then applying implicit floor control; and

if the mode is full-duplex, then not applying implicit floor control.

20.   A communication server for bridging real-time media communications between a plurality of participants in a real-time media session, the communication server comprising:

means for setting up the real-time media session; and

means for instructing at least one of the participants to operate in a mode selected from the group consisting of half-duplex mode and a full-duplex mode.

21.   A user station comprising:

a processor;

a communication interface;

data storage;

instructions stored in the data storage and executable by the processor (i) to engage in a packet-based real-time media session with one or more other user stations via a communication server, (ii) to receive from the communication sever an instruction to operate in a mode selected from the group consisting of half-duplex and full-duplex, and (iii) to operate in the mode during the packet-based real-time media session.

22.   The user station of claim 21, wherein the instructions cause the processor to operate in the mode by causing the processor to perform method steps comprising:

receiving an incoming media stream from the communication server while sending an outgoing media stream to the communication server during the real-time media session;

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treating the incoming media stream as a floor denial if the mode is half-duplex; and

playing out the incoming media stream if the mode is full-duplex.

23. The user station of claim 21, wherein:

5   when the mode is half-duplex, the instructions cause the processor to apply implicit floor control; and

when the mode is full-duplex, the instructions do not cause the processor to apply implicit floor control.

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